

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 L-03 /054 W
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P R 120925Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3505
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: JA, UR, CH, SOPN
SUBJECT: SONODA PRESS CLUB APPEARANCE -- RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND
MOSCOW

REF: TOKYO 19049

1. APART FROM HIS COMMENTS ON JAPANESE ECONOMIC RELATIONS
WITH US AND EC (REPORTED REFTTEL), BULK OF REMAINING Q'S
AND A'S IN FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA'S DEC. 12 PRESS CLUB
APPEARANCE DEALT WITH JAPANESE RELATIONS WITH PRC AND USSR.

2. ON CHINA, SONODA SAID JAPAN WISHED TO CONCLUDE PEACE
AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY IN MANNER SATISFACTORY TO BOTH
PARTIES AND AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE. ELABORATING,
SONODA NOTED HE HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED ISSUE WITH JAPANESE
AMBASSADOR TO PEKING SATO, IN TOKYO FOR COM CONFERENCE,
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AND AFTER ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS AND MEETING WITH
PRIMIN LATER IN WEEK, THERE MIGHT BE DECISION ON
WHETHER AND WHEN TO RENEW PFT NEGOTIATIONS. HE
DECLINED TO SPECULATE WHEN NEGOTIATIONS, IF RESTARTED,
COULD BE CONCLUDED, AND SAID IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER
QUESTION THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR EITHER PRIMIN
OR HIMSELF TO TRAVEL TO PEKING.

3. COMMENTING ON POSSIBLE SOVIET RESPONSE TO FORWARD MOVEMENT ON PFT, SONODA SAID JAPANESE KNEW SOVIETS WOULD BE DISPLEASED, BUT HOPED THAT SOVIETS WOULD NOT BEHAVE "IN MANNER UNBECOMING TO GREAT NATION". SONODA BEMOANED BITTERNESS WITH WHICH SOVIETS VIEWED SINO-JAPAN RELATIONS, NOTING THAT THIS WAS PRODUCT OF "REGRETTABLE" SINO-SOVIET HOSTILITY. SONODA ADDED THAT, IF IT WERE AT ALL POSSIBLE, JAPAN WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEDIATE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE.

4. SONODA'S OTHER REMARKS ON USSR WERE RELATIVELY STANDARD. HE SAID RESOLUTION OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES PROBLEM (MEANING RETURN TO JAPAN OF ALL FOUR DISPUTED ISLANDS) WAS ESSENTIAL TO STABLE JAPAN-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP, ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC RELATIONS SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP IN ABSENCE OF RESOLUTION. SONODA GAVE UNSOLICITED AND UPBEAT ENDORSEMENT TO JAPAN-SOVIET ECONOMIC TIES IN SUGGESTING THAT JAPAN WOULD BE HAPPY TO RESPOND TO SUGGESTIONS FOR JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT (PRESUMABLY MEANING PROJECTS BEYOND THOSE NOW UNDERWAY, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT CLEAR). HE SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CANDID TALKS IN MOSCOW ON WAYS TO IMPROVE JAPAN-SOVIET RELATIONS.

5. COMMENT: POSITIVE TONE OF SONODA STATEMENTS RE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JAPAN-SOVIET ECONOMIC TIES COULD BE HARBINGER OF LINE SONODA WILL TAKE IN MOSCOW TALKS -- I.E., OFFERING ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN RETURN FOR SOVIET RESTRAINT ON PFT. OTHERWISE, APART FROM THROWAWAY OFFER TO MEDIATE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND PEKING, SONODA'S REMARKS WERE PREDICTABLE. SONODA SKILLFULLY PARRIED LEADING QUESTIONS (E.G., SHOULD NOT US DO MORE TO SOLVE ITS OWN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS), GAVE WELL-REASONED AND BALANCED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND DELIVERED RESPONSES WITH CHARACTERISTIC FORCEFULNESS AND WIT. IT WAS EXCELLENT, CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE, ALL THE MORE VIVID BY CONTRAST TO RATHER COLORLESS STYLE OF HIS PREDECESSOR. MANSFIELD

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